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HOMELESS VETERANS AND PROGRAMS

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You asked how many veterans (1) live in Connecticut, (2) living in Connecticut are homeless, and (3) are expected to return from deployment in the next few years and what major issues they will face.

SUMMARY

Based on 2010 census data, approximately 230,000 veterans live in Connecticut. Based on a 2011 count of homeless veterans, an estimated 443 are homeless.

We are still trying to get a reliable estimate of the total number of veterans expected to return to Connecticut from deployment in the next few years. But the Connecticut National Guard says it expects that 887 guard members will return in the next two years.

Based on a review of the literature on veterans, it appears that the two major issues returning veterans will face are employment and health. Some states, including Connecticut, have taken steps to address these issues. Connecticut recently launched a new website to give veterans one-stop access to the wide range of veterans' services and benefits, including employment, education, and health care, offered by the state and federal government (<http://www.veterans.ct.gov/veterans/site/default.asp>).

NUMBER OF VETERANS IN CONNECTICUT

According to a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report, as of September 30, 2010, approximately 230,000 veterans were living in Connecticut, of which (1) 167,800 were wartime veterans and 61,900 peace time veterans and (2) 214,500 were male and 15,200 were female. Vietnam veterans made up the majority of wartime veterans (78,400) followed by Gulf War veterans (40,800).

Table 1 shows the breakdown of Connecticut veterans by conflict.

Table 1: Number of Veterans in Connecticut (as of 9/30/2010)

Conflict	Number of Veterans
Wartime	167,800
Gulf War	40,800
Vietnam	78,400
Korean Conflict	28,400
WWII	25,700
Peace time	61,900

Source: The VA Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDx) Report, May 22, 2012 at http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN CONNECTICUT

Veterans consistently represent 10% of people staying in Connecticut's emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, according to the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. Also according to the coalition, veterans are more likely to be unsheltered and to experience longer periods of homelessness than non-veterans (<http://www.cceh.org/news/archive/number-of-homeless-veterans-declines-nationally>).

The coalition cites substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression among the major contributing factors to homelessness among veterans.

A 2011 point-in-time count of veterans, reported in a September 2012 VA report found 443 homeless veterans statewide (396 in shelters and 47 outside of shelters (see Table 2)). This represents a 4.1% drop from the 462 counted in 2009.

Table 2: Number of Homeless Veterans in Connecticut

	Total Veterans	Sheltered Veterans	Unsheltered Veterans
Bridgeport/Stratford/Fairfield	64	57	7
Hartford	78	77	1
New Haven	93	89	4
Norwalk/Fairfield County	11	8	3
Stamford/Greenwich	23	9	4
Waterbury	6	2	4
Balance of Connecticut	178	154	24
Total	443	396	47

Source: U.S. VA Profile of Sheltered Homeless Veterans for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, September 2012.

Homeless Assistance Resources of Connecticut, sponsored by federal agencies, describes resources available to Connecticut veterans, including information on shelters, transitional housing, legal services, meals, and support services.

HEALTH ISSUES

A growing body of research has found that prolonged military conflicts and multiple deployments are taking an accumulating psychological toll on service members. For example, a 2009 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that more than one-third of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who enrolled in the federal veterans' health system after 2001 were diagnosed with a mental health problem. Twenty-two percent of them were diagnosed with PTSD, 17% with depression, and 7% with alcohol abuse (*Trends and Risk Factors for Mental Health Diagnoses Among Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Using Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care, 2002-2008*, by Karen H. Seal, et al).

VA CT The Errera Community Care Center provides a continuum of psychosocial, medical and educational services ranging from acute to long-term rehabilitation and includes job training. Services include crisis intervention, housing, case management, education and skills training, recreation and creative arts therapy, and vocational rehabilitation.

EMPLOYMENT

Despite having a lower unemployment rate (9.3%) than the general state population (9.8%), many returning veterans report having difficulty finding civilian jobs, especially ones that match their work in the military (see American Fact Finder: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates, retrieved November 23, 2012). The reasons for

unemployment among veterans include the uncertainty raised by multiple deployments, extended time away from an increasingly competitive job market, and concerns that returning troops may have psychological problems.

A review of the relevant research suggests that the employment issue will become even more urgent as the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan winds down.

Connecticut

The Connecticut Department of Labor provides various employment-related services for returning veterans, including (1) credentialing and training opportunities for veterans with training providers and licensing agencies and (2) job fairs promoting employment and training opportunities for veterans with business organizations, unions, and apprenticeship programs.

Other programs include the subsidized Training and Employment Program (commonly called STEP-Up), which provides grants to subsidize businesses' costs of hiring and training unemployed veterans.

Other States

Some states, for example, Missouri and Illinois, have initiated programs to address the possible large influx of returning veterans. The Missouri "Show-Me Heroes Program," coordinated by the Department of Economic Development, asks businesses statewide to take a pledge to employ veterans. Any Missouri employer registered with the Missouri secretary of state may participate in the program. Companies that honor the pledge are recognized on the program's website (<http://showmeheroes.mo.gov/Veteran.aspx?pageid=1>).

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) says that it is committed to assistance programs that provide individual job counseling for veterans, tax incentives that encourage businesses to hire veterans, and other resources designed to help veterans transition back to civilian life (<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=843>). IDES provides eligible veterans with intensive services to help identify and overcome employment barriers. These services include coordination and outreach with other state agencies and one-on-one employment assistance.

Federal Programs

The federal government recently launched the “Veterans Jobs Bank,” an easy-to-use tool to help veterans find job postings by companies looking to hire veterans. The bank facilitates access to private-sector job openings and postings specifically targeted at veterans (https://www.nrd.gov/home/veterans_job_bank). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor recently launched My Next Move for Veterans, an online resource that allows veterans to enter their military occupation code and find civilian occupations for which they are qualified.

The “Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program” provides vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing support to improve employment outcomes among homeless veterans and veterans at-risk of homelessness.

The “VA Compensated Work Therapy Program” is a national vocational program that helps homeless veterans return to competitive employment.

The “Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment VetSuccess Program” helps veterans with service -connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. Services include comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment; employment services; help finding and keeping a job; and on-the-job training and non-paid work experiences.

The “Veterans Retraining Assistance Program” offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed veterans.

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